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CHARUDUTT MISHRA[1,2]
APARAJITA DATTA[1]
M.D. MADHUSUDAN[1]

[1]Nature Conservation Foundation,
3076/5, IV Cross Gokulam Park,
Mysore 570 002, Karnataka, India.
[2]International Snow Leopard Trust,
4649 N. Sunnyside Avenue,
Suite 325, Seattle, WA 98103, USA.
Email: charu@ncf-india.org

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6. CHARAKLA SALTPANS: A HAVEN FOR BLACK-NECKED GREBE *PODICEPS NIGRICOLLIS* BREHM

During a survey of coastal birds from January 11-14, 2003, we counted 1,432 Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* at four sites (Table 1) in Jamnagar and Porbandar districts of Gujarat. The highest concentration of about 1,400

Table 1: Count of Black-necked Grebes during January 2003, Gujarat

Site	District	Date	Number
Charakla saltpans	Jamnagar	12.1.2003	1405
Meedha Tidal Regulator	Porbandar	12.1.2003	5
Rosy Pier saltpans	Jamnagar	14.1.2003	4
Sanctuary saltpans	Jamnagar	14.1.2003	18
Total			1432

grebes was recorded at Charakla Saltpans, near Dwarka (22° 14' N, 69° 01' E); the grebes were seen in the saltpan in three groups of 1000, 375 and 30 individuals each. Grebes observed at the other three sites were found either singly or in pairs.

We also saw one white coloured Black-necked Grebe, with some black splashes on the head and sides of its body, amongst a group of thousand birds at Charakla Saltpans. The white grebe was at ease with the other grebes with normal plumage and was also seen diving occasionally like its conspecifics.

The highest concentration of Black-necked Grebes (201) was first reported in December 1996 from Charakla Saltpans (Parasharya *et al.* 1998). Earlier, about 50 grebes (Balar and Balar 1999) had been spotted on January 10, 1996; and Bhaskaran (1996) had spotted about 51 grebes in October 1996. Since 1996, significantly higher concentrations of grebes have been observed every year at the same site by the birdwatchers of Gujarat. Balar and Balar (1999) reported about 800-1000 grebes in January 1999; they had taken several photographs, one of which was published in the Times of India dated June 26, 1999.

Two hundred and fifty birds represent 1% biogeographical population of Black-necked Grebe (Wetlands International 2002). A site becomes internationally important if it supports more than 1% biogeographical population of any one species of waterfowl regularly. Charakla Saltpans seems to be an internationally important site for Black-necked Grebe as it has supported high concentrations of the species on a regular basis since 1996.

All the present sightings are on the Gulf of Kachchh (Jamnagar district) or in its vicinity (Porbandar district). Parasharya and Mukherjee (1998) had also reported concentration of grebes around these two districts. Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and Kazmierczak (2000) have reported regular occurrence of grebes along the coast of the Gulf of Kachchh. Hence, all the saltpans along the southern coast of the Gulf of Kachchh should be checked for the occurrence of Black-necked Grebe.

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ANIKA JADHAV
B.M. PARASHARYA
AINP on Agricultural Ornithology,
Gujarat Agricultural University,
Anand, Gujarat 388 110, India.

BHARAT RUGHANI
5, Wadi Plot, Bharatnivas,
Porbandar, Gujarat 360 575,
India.

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7. MIGRATION OF BLACK-EARED OR LARGE INDIAN KITE *MILVUS MIGRANS LINEATUS* (GRAY) FROM MONGOLIA TO NORTH-EASTERN INDIA

The Black-eared or Large Indian Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus* (Gray) is regarded as a resident with unclear abundance in Assam (Choudhury 2000) while the subspecies *govinda* is among the most abundant birds. Ali and Ripley (1987) had quoted Baker (FBI No. 1788, Vol. 5: 124) about its breeding in the hills, south of the Brahmaputra river and mentioned that elsewhere in India (excluding extreme south) it is a winter visitor in small numbers. On migration they stated, referring Frank Ludlow (*Ibis* 1937: 493), coming from north through Bhutan on September 5. Thus, little data is available on its migration.

A single specimen of *Milvus migrans lineatus* was captured live by a villager near Loktak Lake in Manipur on October 22, 2001. It was near Mayong Imphal (24° 36' N, 93° 54' E) towards east of the lake at an elevation of 790 m above msl. Efforts to buy the bird and release it back did not succeed as the owner refused to sell it. The bird had a ring marked "Hiddensee Germania EA 096970". After a lot of